

THE NORTH WALK MYSTERY

BY WILL N. HARBEN.

AUTHOR OF
"FROM CLUE TO CLIMAX."
"THE LAND OF THE CHANGING SUN."
"ALMOST PERSUADED."
"A MUTE CONFESSOR."
ETC. ETC. ETC.

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CHAPTER XV.

Kola's residence was a three storied house. It was very old styled in appearance and was the only building in the block which stood back from the street. It had a garden in front protected by a massive iron fence 20 feet in height. Hendricks unlocked a side gate, went to the door and rapped with the old fashioned knocker. Lampkin had noticed from the garden that there were no lights in any of the windows, and when the door opened on its creaking hinges the absolute darkness within was an additional surprise.

"Hello! Here we are!" said Hendricks, addressing some one behind the door. "Stand here and wait for Mr. Kola. He's behind with the party. Come on, doctor." Hendricks caught the arm of his friend and drew him down what seemed to be a dark hall. As they moved along Lampkin heard the massive door close with a little puff of escaping air, and then, as all sound from the outside was instantly excluded, he knew that the doors and windows had been purposely padded.

Dr. Lampkin heard Hendricks sliding his fingers along the wall for about 20 feet. Then they passed. Hendricks took hold of the knob of a door and opened it soundlessly, and when they had passed through it closed softly into its padded frame.

"Now we are all hunky dory," remarked Hendricks. "Stand where you are. I've got to get you into another disguise. They must not recognize us as the two old codgers they saw at Mrs. Ringley's—I mean in case a light should be struck. I don't know Kola's plan exactly."

Hendricks stooped and began to feel about on the floor. "Here we are!" he exclaimed presently. "Take off that beard and put on this cambric domino. It will be cooler."

Dr. Lampkin obeyed as well as he could in the darkness. "Where in thunder are we?" he asked as he took off his false beard and handed it to his friend.

"In the room Kola has arranged for the manifestation. Have you got the rig on? Can you find the eye holes?" "I'm all right and a great deal more comfortable," replied the doctor. "Sit down here," said Hendricks. "I have picked out this place for you. You can witness not only the show, but can see the spectators. Sit! I hear something. It was a key in the door."

Lampkin heard Hendricks' feet sliding on the thick carpet as he glided away in the darkness. Then the roar of the city sounded through the house, and he knew the front door was open.

"Come in. You have nothing to fear," sounded the strange accent of the adept. "You are perfectly safe here."

"By Jove!" drawled Montcastle. "Do you expect us to go into a house as dark as a cavern with a man we never saw before?"

"You may stay out if you like," answered the adept. "It is not for me to urge. The revelation is only for you. My master sent for you. I was to know you by—but I need not tell you that."

"Of course we will go, now we have gone so far as this," spoke up Stanwood. "I am not afraid. Are you, Benton?"

"No," replied Ralph's voice. "I was only thinking that the ladies—" "There will be a light presently," said Kola, still in his placid monotone. "But you must decide now what you are going to do. Every minute lessens your chances of getting a strong psychic revelation."

"Come on," said Ralph. "We are ready. Dispose of us."

"I think, perhaps," began the weak voice of Allen, but the closing door interrupted it. The next minute Lampkin heard them entering the room he was in and the adept giving them seats.

"Now be perfectly quiet. Speak under no circumstances," said the adept impressively. Then he raised his voice and asked:

"Is the master here?" "He sleeps, but awaits an awakening," sounded a deep, solemn voice in the distance.

"Tell him the people holding the eternal sign of death are in the audience chamber in accordance with his desire."

"Oh, brother!" began Miss Benton, but the adept leaned forward and interrupted her.

"Be quiet. You will spoil it all," he whispered.

out softly, and then he saw a square of grayish light appear in the ceiling. It grew lighter till it was exactly like a glimpse of the sky on a dark night. Now and then a star could be seen under thin, filmy clouds, which seemed to be driven along by a high wind.

"Wonderful, by Jove!" exclaimed Montcastle's voice. "I have!"

Instantly the scene vanished. Only the most intense darkness remained. Kola bent toward Montcastle.

"It was because you spoke, kind sir," he said. "If you talk, the master will retire."

Silence and blackness reigned for five minutes. Then the flute note sounded, and the view of the sky returned. For awhile it was as it had been before. Then one of the stars, which had appeared so indistinct as to be unseen at times, began to blaze fiercely. Now and then it would seem to have some sort of internal eruption.

It would burn red and blue and throw off bits of fire, which floated downward and slowly expired. One of the sparks, instead of going out, grew brighter and brighter as it descended till it took the form of a letter "B" and then melted away. The next spark formed the letter "E," and the letters of fire continued to form and fall till the word "Benton" had been spelled.

The last letter went out with a bright flash, giving Lampkin a vague view of the large room and the Benton party about 20 feet in front of him. The next instant the room was totally dark. It remained so for two or three minutes. Then the flute note sounded again, and a large square of light appeared ahead of them. It looked as if it were half a mile from where the spectators sat.

Slowly it began to take the form of the interior of a room. The walls, pictures and curtains came into view, and then the furniture, a desk, a man sitting at it.

Alice Benton stifled a scream. It was her father. He sat writing. He leaned forward and dipped his pen in the inkstand. The spectators saw the movement of his hand over the paper and heard the scratching of his pen. He turned his head, looked at them and then rose deliberately, laid his left hand on his breast and pointed steadily at them.

His lips moved, but no sound passed through them. Then Dr. Lampkin heard some one gasping for breath and a heavy weight fall to the floor. Instantly the room was dark.

"A light!" cried Ralph Benton's voice. "Turn on the lights! Something has happened to Mr. Allen."

"What has happened?" asked the adept from the darkness.

"Mr. Allen has fainted," replied Ralph. "He was not well and did not want to come here anyway. Why don't you turn on the lights?"

Dr. Lampkin felt some one touch his elbow and the warm breath of the detective on his ear.

"Remain where you are," whispered Hendricks. "Blast his ugly picture!" "Give us a light, I say!" cried Ralph angrily.

"See, here—your Mr. Allen is waking," said the adept.

"Waking?" sneered Benton. "Do you think that's the way he usually retires?" The darkness was lifted slightly. How it was done Lampkin could not tell. Montcastle and Ralph could be seen standing and supporting Allen between them.

"The door is open," said Kola. "You'd better all go out into the fresh air."

Montcastle and Allen were groping

A man will defend his honor with his life. What is more dishonorable than unnecessary failure? Thousands of men make failures of life and die premature deaths, leaving wives and children unprotected, because of their reckless neglect of health. No man can do good work or be successful in business who suffers from biliousness, digestive and nervous disorders such as sick headache, giddiness, dizziness, drowsiness, cold chills, flushings of heat, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, fullness and swelling after meals, wind and pain in the stomach, costiveness, blotches on the skin, loss of sleep, disturbed sleep, frightful dreams and nervous and trembling sensations.

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The doctor heard Miss Benton cry

toward the door, led by the adept. Suddenly Ralph, who had not moved, raised his voice:

"I don't intend to leave till I know what this infernal business means. I say, Montcastle, give me a match!"

"Curse the young dave devil!" exclaimed Hendricks, still near to Lampkin, and the doctor heard him take something from his pocket which rattled like pieces of metal. "I'll pay him for this."

Then the flute note sounded twice. "The master wants us to retire," said Kola.

"Who the devil is 'the master'?" sneered Ralph. "This thing touches my own family, and I am going to look into it."

"Don't be a fool," cautioned Stanwood. "The ladies are here, and they have already had enough."

"For my sake, come on, dear!" implored Miss Hastings. "We don't know where we are, and—"

"Montcastle," commanded Ralph, "take the ladies out. I am going to look into this. It's all a trick to work on our imaginations by that infernal Hendricks."

Lampkin heard the metallic clicking in the detective's hand and saw him glide suddenly forward. He had no sooner reached Ralph than another clicking sound was heard. There was a struggle, a rattling of a chain, and an angry oath escaped Benton's lips.

"What do you mean?" he cried, turning on Hendricks and raising his handcuffed wrists threateningly.

"You are under arrest for the murder of your father," said Hendricks. He whistled shrilly, and a light was turned on behind a screen in the rear. Its beams partially lighted the long room

Montcastle and Ralph could be seen standing and supporting Allen.

and revealed a strange sight. Hendricks, his long beard and wig suspended round his neck and as red in the face as a lobster, stood holding a revolver in his hand and grinning at his prisoner.

"You are under arrest for the murder of your father," he repeated. "The rest of your party had better retire."

Ralph's manacled hands hung down before him. For a moment he seemed speechless. Miss Hastings leaned toward him excitedly and put her hands on his arm.

"For God's sake, be brave, darling!" he said. "It's all a mistake. It will be cleared up at once." He turned to the detective.

"I know too much to struggle against the law," he said. "What do you intend to do with me?"

"Lodge you in the police station till it is decided whether you can get out on bail," replied Hendricks.

Ralph laughed. "It's all a joke," he said, turning to Miss Hastings. "Julia, go home with sister. I promise you on my honor to be home tonight. Have I ever told you a falsehood?"

"No," said Miss Hastings. She started toward him, but Stanwood drew her to the door, where Montcastle stood trying to calm Miss Benton. "Come along," he said. "It is no doubt as he says. Benton will come on later."

Miss Hastings covered her face with her hands and drew back irresolutely, but at a sign from Ralph she joined the others and went out of the house. The front door closed.

"Did you want a policeman, sir?" sounded Kola's voice from the hall. "If so, he is here."

"He may wait out there," replied the detective. "I don't think Mr. Benton is going to give us trouble."

"No; I'll take it all right, I promise you," said Ralph, with a dry laugh. "I couldn't fight a cat with these things on. I say, Hendricks, enough of a thing is a glorious sufficiency. Take 'em off. I know it's all a joke. You are trying to get even for my obstinacy just now."

Hendricks ignored the remark. "On second thought," he called out to the adept, "tell the policeman to take Mr. Benton into the back room until I order a cab."

The policeman came forward and conducted Ralph to the small room at the end of the hall. Kola approached, and Lampkin, at a signal from the detective, came forward.

"Come back there with me," Hendricks said to the doctor. "I want to talk to the fellow. By the way, Kola, you did your part well. The cold chills ran up and down my back like mice in a revolving trap."

"Did it answer your purpose? That's the chief thing," replied the adept.

"Can't say yet," replied the detective. "It won't do much harm anyway. The women stood it beautifully. I was afraid they would go into hysterics."

"They are always anxious to understand psychical things," answered the adept. "It was Mr. Allen and Mr. Montcastle who objected most to coming. To tell the truth, Mr. Hendricks, the arrest astounded me. I should think—"

"Don't think just yet," interrupted Hendricks, with a laugh, and he led them back to the little room in the rear.

when swung over the center table. Ralph sat on a divan, the chain of his handcuffs hanging between his knees. The tall, heavily built policeman leaned in the doorway.

Ralph laughed as Hendricks entered. "I can't complain at this treatment," Hendricks said, "and, as to the cab, I'm glad you are not going to haul me off in the black maria. As it is open at both ends, one would be liable to sit in a draft."

Hendricks smiled, but did not reply. He turned to the policeman.

"Go get a glass of beer and wait on the stoop," he said.

Ralph began to fumble in the pocket of his waistcoat and produced a quarter of a dollar.

"I say, Hendricks," he said, rising and tossing the money on the table, "you won't mind if I stand treat, will you?"

"Not at all," was the answer. The policeman grinned as he picked up the coin and touched his hat to the young man, who had resumed his seat on the divan. Hendricks sat down and drummed on the table with his fingers.

"I say, Hendricks, all jokes aside," said Ralph, "are you detectives—you fellows with names that are household words, as it were—are you ever badly mistaken?"

"Seldom when we get along as far as I have with you," answered the detective. "At any rate, you are an agreeable prisoner. You make it a pleasure instead of a task. I may say you fill the bill ideally."

The fire of Ralph's wit seemed to die out. His face grew serious.

"There is no use going further with this," said he. "Tell me frankly what evidence you have against me."

Hendricks took a cigar case from his pocket. He passed it first to Ralph, then to Lampkin and the adept. Ralph was the only one to accept, and he became amused again when he tried to get a match from his pocket and was prevented by the handcuffs.

"You may as well unchain me," he said. "I promise not to break away. It would be folly for me to try to down the man at the door, you three and your hosts of hidden demons, who are the geni of the master's dark lantern."

"I don't think I shall run any risks," said the detective, striking a match and holding it to the end of the young man's cigar. "A bird in hand, you know, is worth two on the roof," as the Germans put it."

Ralph nodded.

"The only thing that puzzles me," he said, "is my arrest. It is incongruous. I am the stone that spoils the mosaic. I ought not to be in it, but it seems that I am. Hendricks, I have had a queer sort of admiration for you in the past, but I have never thought you could be stupid enough to arrest the wrong man under any circumstances. If you don't unchain me before I explain, you shall cease to be my ideal detective."

"I should dislike that," answered Hendricks, "but I presume my pride must suffer—that is, if you are the wrong man."

Ralph puffed two or three times to keep his cigar alight. Suddenly he bent his puzzled gaze again on Hendricks.

"Tell me exactly why you have arrested me," he demanded. "You are woefully off the track. Honestly, that's a fact."

"Am I?" Hendricks shrugged his shoulders and glanced slyly at Lampkin, whose eye he caught. "I know that on the night of the murder you came in at the side gate and crossed the grass in a bee line for the north walk. I found your tracks, the only footprints not explained by others, near the body of your father. These tracks I traced to a certain point on the walk, where"—

"I don't think I shall run any risks," he said, "where the maker of them vanished in the air like the nightmare we saw just now," put in Ralph, with a smile.

"So it seemed at first," agreed Hendricks, "but the other day Wilson, the gardener, recalled the fact that in order to surprise the young ladies, who had expressed a desire to have a swing, you had yourself late in the afternoon hung one from a bough of a big oak. The night your father was killed it was hanging at the edge of the walk, not five feet from the spot where the footprints ended. What had become of the swing Wilson could not imagine, but I found it in the hollow of the tree above the lower boughs."

Hendricks paused, knocked the ashes from his cigar and took two or three draws at it, his eyes the while fixed on the young man's face.

Ralph smiled.

"Well," he said, "go ahead."

"It suddenly occurred to you," continued Hendricks, "that the sand was taking the impression of your feet, and you sprang to the swing. You climbed one of the tow ropes to the boughs to which it was fastened and then drew the swing up after you. After this you unfastened the rope and crammed it into the hollow of the tree."

"What did I do then?" asked Ralph coolly. "I swear, you have as many eyes as a water beetle. I wonder if even you could tell what I next did."

Lampkin, who had had considerable experience with criminals, decided admiringly that this was the coolest cul-

prit he had ever met. He glanced at the adept and was astonished to see a broad grin on his face.

"You crawled out on a long bough till it bent down to the roof of the woodshed," answered Hendricks. "This reached you, next went from it to the roof of the wellhouse, thence to the roof of the veranda, thence into your room through an open window."

"Pretty good!" said Ralph calmly. "But has it occurred to you, Hendricks, that some one else might have done all this?"

"I went into your room and searched it," went on the detective. "I found the dress suit you had worn that evening, and on it were fragments of tow from the swing."

"I presume it would be hard for me to prove that some one else had worn my suit of clothes that night," said the young man. "Did you find out where I had been in the city that evening?"

"To your club first, then to the Casino with Van Alston."

"Exactly," said Ralph. "How uncomfortable to know that one has been traced like that! And to be suspected of such a crime! I don't fancy it at all, Hendricks. I am not a lawyer by any means, but I am not such a fool as to believe you could hang me with that chain of circumstances."

"You are heir to a large fortune left by your father," went on Hendricks impressively. "Only a short while before she heard the report of the revolver, according to the testimony of Miss Hastings, she overheard your father say to some one: 'You are no child of mine from this day forth. I shall disown you tomorrow.' You and your father had recently quarreled."

"Stop!" cried Ralph, rising in excitement. "She did not testify that. I did not hear her."

"She did," asserted Hendricks firmly. Ralph turned to Lampkin.

"Did—did you understand Miss Hastings to testify to that?" he asked in a trembling tone.

"I did most certainly," answered the doctor. "Mr. Hendricks quoted her exact words."

[CONTINUED.]

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Russell Kipling, Richard Harding Davis, Joel Chandler Harris, George W. Cable, and others, are under engagement to contribute stories during 1898.

Robert Grant's "Search Light Letters"—replies to various letters that came in consequence of his "Reflections of a Married Man" and "The Opinions of a Philosopher."

"The Workers" in a new field—Walter A. Wyckoff, the college man who became a laborer, will tell about his experience with sweat shop laborers and anarchists in Chicago. (Illustrated from life by W. R. Leigh.)

The Theatre, The Time, etc., will be treated in "The Conquest of Great Britain" series (as were "The Wheat Farm," "The Newspaper," etc., in '97), with numerous illustrations.

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C. D. Gibson will contribute two serials of drawings during '98, "A New York Day," and "The Seven Ages of American Women."

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TIME TABLE IN EFFECT SEPT 6, '97

Trains leave Owosso as follows:

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Daily except Sunday No. 1, 10:59 a.m. No. 3, 7:15 p.m.	Daily except Sunday No. 2, 9:00 a.m. No. 4, 5:45 p.m.

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TRAINS NORTH.

Bay City Express leaves 9:40 a.m., arrives at Bay City 11:10 a.m. Sleeper, Chicago to Bay City. Marquette Express leaves Owosso 7:15 p.m., arrives at Bay City 9:20 p.m. Owosso accommodation leaves Jackson 11:15 a.m., arrives Owosso 1:35 p.m. Bay City Accommodation leaves Owosso 2:50 p.m., arrives in Bay City 5:10 p.m. All trains daily except Sunday. J. B. GIBSON, Local Agent, Owosso W. ROGERS, G. P. & T. A., Chicago.

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(Detroit & Milwaukee Division.)

TIME TABLE IN EFFECT NOV. 17, 1897

Arrival and Departure of Trains at Owosso.

Westward.	Leave	Arrive.
Gr'd Rapids, Gr'd Haven and Muskegon.	11:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.
Gr'd Rapids, Gr'd Haven and Muskegon.	7:40 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Grand Rapids.	7:17 p.m.	1:10 a.m.
Gr'd Rapids, and Muskegon.	8:45 a.m.	2:30 p.m.
Mixed from Owosso.	4:05 p.m.	7:15 p.m.

Eastward.

Leave	Arrive.	
Detroit, Canada and East.	9:00 a.m.	7:15 p.m.
Detroit and Chicago via Durand and Saginaw.	1:10 p.m.	1:10 p.m.
Detroit, Canada and East.	6:08 p.m.	10:00 a.m.
Detroit, Canada and East.	8:25 p.m.	2:25 a.m.

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WESTWARD.

10:02 a.m. train has Parlor car to Grand Rapids. Extra charge 25 cents. Pullman Parlor car Detroit to Toronto, connecting with Sleeper for the east and New York. Connects with C. & O. T. Division at Durand for Chicago and P. & M. Division at Saginaw and Bay City.

EASTWARD.

6:30 p.m. train has Parlor car to Detroit. Extra charge 25 cents, and Pullman Sleeping car Detroit to Toronto, Suspension Bridge, Buffalo, Philadelphia and New York. Connects at Durand with C. & O. M. div. for Saginaw and Bay City and with C. & G. T. for P. & M. Division and Battle Creek.

(Toledo, Saginaw & Muskegon Division.)

EASTWARD

Arrive, Owosso Junction, 8:50 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

WESTWARD.

Leave Owosso Junction, 5:30 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

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